

Utah Health Status Update:

Utah Children's Access to Routine Medical Care

November 2004

Utah Department of Health

The health of children depends partially upon their access to health care services. The vast majority of Utah families use their own private resources to provide health care for their children. The primary role of public health in this area is to assess, and in some cases assure, the availability of health care to all children. The Utah Department of Health monitors children's access to health care through periodic surveys of health insurance coverage, utilization of preventive services and other indicators of potential barriers to health care for children.

Health Insurance Coverage

There were 49,800 children age 17 and under without health insurance coverage in Utah in 2001, the date of the most recent survey focused on children's access to care. This amounted to 6.8% of all Utah children. Children without health insurance were most likely to be in families with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level, wherein 15.2% of children were without health insurance coverage (Figure 1). Of Utah children with health insurance coverage, 81.8% were covered by a current or former employer of someone in the household (Figure 2). Medicaid covered 9.3% of children and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) 3.9%.

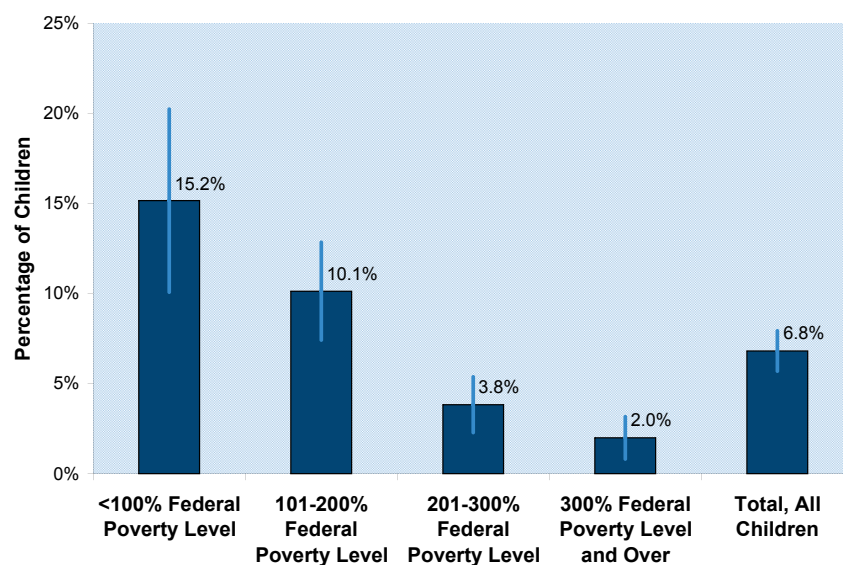
Access Problems Among the Insured

In addition to children without insurance coverage, parents of 22,200 insured children, or 3.3% of all Utah children, reported that they experienced a problem or delayed getting needed care in the previous 12 months. Almost two thirds of these (62.1%) were problems getting dental care that was not covered by the parent's insurance.

Statewide, only 1.5% of insured children experienced a problem or delayed seeking needed care because they could not find services in their area (Figure 3). However, children in South-eastern (8.5%), Tooele (5.5%), and TriCounty (5.5%) health districts had significantly more difficulty finding needed health services in their area compared to the statewide average.

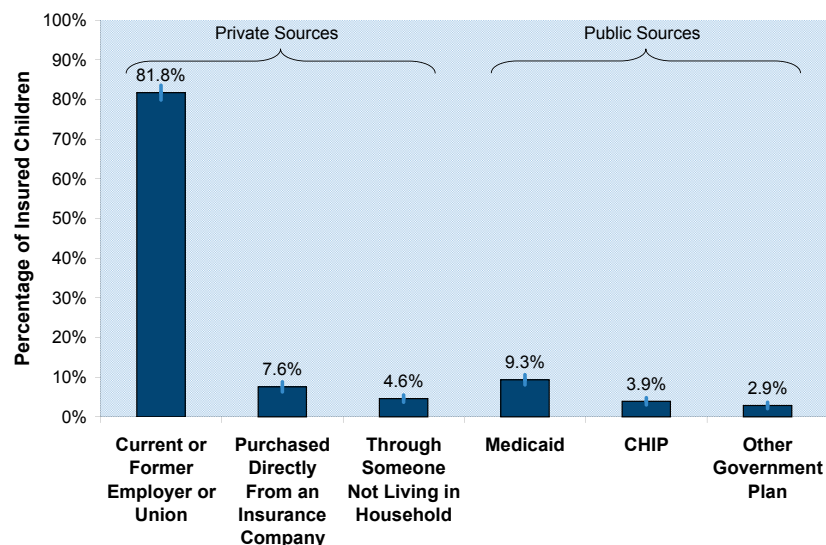
Insurance Coverage and Poverty

Figure 1. Percentage of children without health insurance coverage by poverty level, Utah, 2001



Type of Health Insurance

Figure 2. Percentage of insured children with each type of health insurance, Utah, 2001



Routine Medical Check-ups

Current pediatric guidelines recommend that children over the age of two should have a routine medical check-up at least once a year. The majority (73.2%) of Utah children received routine medical check-ups in the 12 months prior to the survey (Figure 4). Children under 5 were

more likely to receive a routine medical visit in the past year (86.8%) than adolescents 13-17 (63.7%).

Usual Place of Medical Care

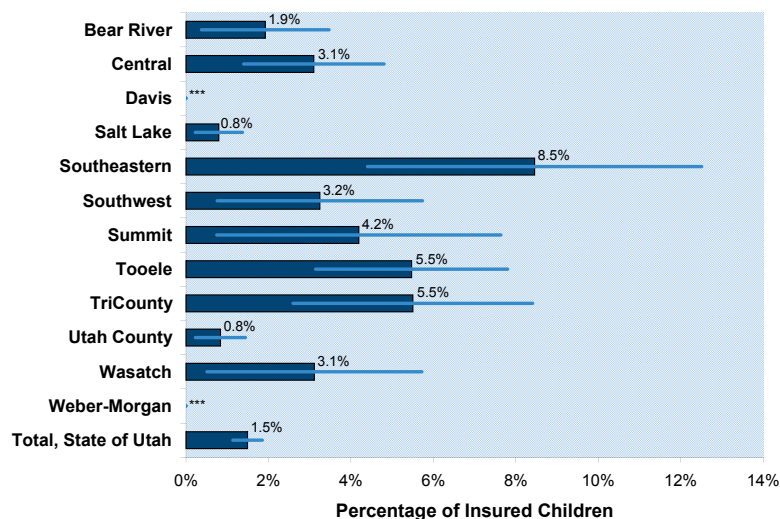
The percentage of children who had no usual place of medical care was 4.0%, representing 29,500 Utah children. Having a usual place of medical care is strongly associated with socioeconomic status. Only 2.6% of children in households headed by a college graduate had no usual place of medical care, while 14.5% of children in households where the head of household had not graduated from high school had no usual place of medical care (Figure 5).

The goals of preventive health care include:

- Detect medical conditions that that may not be easily recognized which need medical attention
- Promote health through education, guidance, and counseling
- Identify medical problems through screenings, such as measurements of growth, vision, hearing, and blood lead levels
- Provide early detection and treatment of illnesses with symptoms to prevent complications or chronic conditions

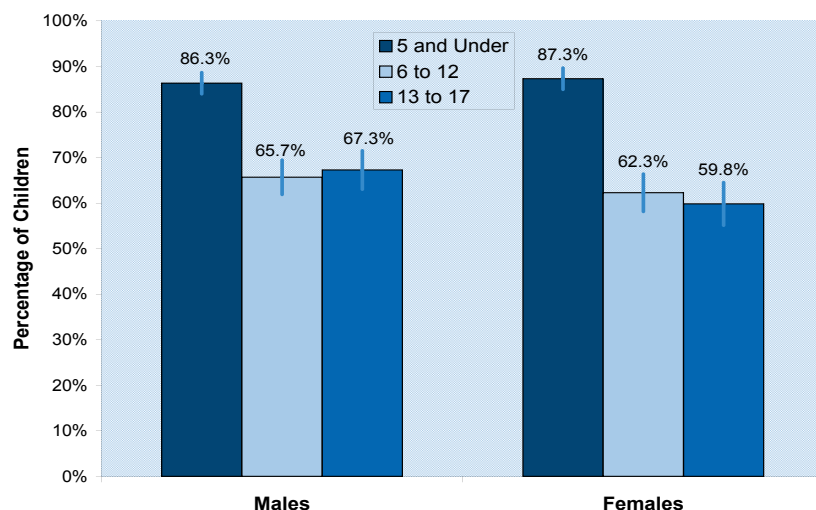
Problems and Delays by Local Health District

Figure 3. Percentage of insured children who had a problem or delayed seeking needed health care in the previous 12 months because they could not find the services in their area by health district, Utah, 2001



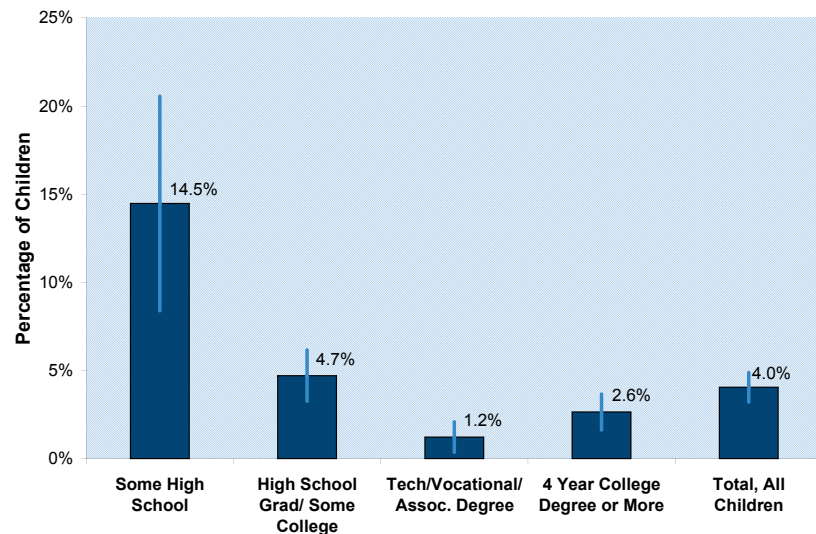
Routine Check-up by Age

Figure 4. Percentage of children who received a routine medical check-up in the previous 12 months by age, Utah, 2001



No Usual Place of Care by Education

Figure 5. Percentage of children who had no usual place of medical care by education, Utah, 2001



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For additional information about this topic, contact the Office of Public Health Assessment, Utah Department of Health, P.O. Box 142101, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2101, (801) 538-6108, FAX (801) 538-9346, email: phdata@utah.gov. This report was funded in part by the SSDI (State Systems Development Initiative) grant through the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health.